

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Kindly amend paragraph [0032] as follows:

[0032] Using the user utterance, the system establishes at least one lit node and a new focus node (306). FIG. 2B illustrates the new focus and lit node as node 210 for “Individual.” The answer to query (308) is Yes since there is only a single direct lit descendent (the individual node 210) of the focus node Tax Info 208. The focus node Tax Info 208 can represent a current focus node 208. The method determines whether the lit focus node 210 is a leaf node (314). In this example, the answer is no since an e-file node 218 and a self-employment node 220 both remain as descendents of the focus node 210. The method returns to step (318) that prompts the user as follows to disambiguate between descendent nodes: “Would you like to hear about e-filing or self-employment?”. The user responds with “Electronic filing” and the method establishes the electronic filing node (218) as the new focus and lit node (306). This e-filing node 218 is a single direct descendent of the focus node 210 and so node 218 is made the new focus node (310). The method determines that the lit focus node 218 is a leaf node (314) and thus the disambiguation routine is complete (316).

Kindly amend paragraph [0034] as follows:

[0034] FIG. 2C illustrates a partial disambiguation portion of the method. This shows how the method operates when more than one node is lit by the user input in step (306). We will continue to follow the tax example starting at the beginning of the prompting process to illustrate the operation of the method. The focus node to start is the Tax Info node (208). The system starts by prompting the user: “This is the IRS help system. What can I do for you?” (302). The user responds: “I need to find out more about tax shelters.” (304). Based on the user utterance, the method establishes two lit nodes 230 and 240 for tax shelter information. The answer to the

inquiry in step (308) is no, since there is not a single direct descendent of the focus node 208 that is lit. The method next finds the lowest common ancestor node of all lit nodes and sets it as the focus node (312). This is accomplished in the tax example by establishing the business node 216 as the new focus node since it is the closest common ancestor to the lit tax shelter node 230 and the lit tax shelter node 240. The new focus node 216 differs from the current focus node 208. After step (312), the method prompts the user to disambiguate between descendent nodes of the focus node (318) as follows: "Are you a small business, or a mid-to-large sized business?" The user responds with "A small business." (304). Based on the user utterance, the system establishes at least one lit node and a new focus node (306). The new focus node is the small business node 226. This node is also lit. The tax shelter node 240 has been "cut" since the mid-to-large business category associated with the node 228 is specifically ruled out based on the interchange with the user. The lit tax shelter node 230 is a single direct descendent of the focus node 226 (step 308). The tax shelter node 230 is made the new focus node in step (310) and the method determines that the lit focus node 230 is a leaf node in step (314). Thus, disambiguation is complete (316).